

LTC17D006

Title: Reading list mandate uptake: biannual report
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Issue

In May 2017 Learning and Teaching Committee approved a mandate for TALIS for essential course texts, i.e. core reading, across all schools to more effectively tackle the issues the students have raised about the inconsistencies in reading list provision. Academic colleagues were asked to comply from the 2017/18 academic year, with an indicative target of 31st July 2017 for new lists, and rollover of existing lists. This was to enable sufficient time for new items to be ordered for the start of teaching in Semester 1 and for students to get access to their reading prior to the semester.

This briefing note is a “snapshot in time”, describing the volume of lists received by the library for the 2017/18 academic year to the library, ahead of the LTC deadline of 31 July 2017, as well as subsequent activity to 3rd October 2017.

Recommendation

- Recipients are asked to note the contents of the report and to continue advocacy work with faculties and schools to further increase uptake

Resource Implications

- None at this stage.

Risk Implications

Modules that do not provide reading lists in a timely manner to students and the library may not be perceived positively by students. Talis Reading lists are used by the library to ensure the adequate provision of books, ebooks and articles to support teaching. If academics do not provide reading lists using the University system there is a risk that the student experience will be undermined and there will be inconsistency in resource provision between disciplines.

Equality and Diversity

The Library aims to make all of its services and facilities accessible to all. An Equality Impact Assessment exists for the online reading list service.

Faculty	School	Semester 1, T1 & year-long modules requiring reading lists	Talis lists as of published 31/7/17	% compliance indicator by 31/7/17	Talis lists published as of 03/10/17	% compliance indicator by 03/10/17
FMH	HSC	139	27	19%	37	27%
FMH	MED	89	5	6%	13	15%
FMH	Total	228	32	14%	50	22%
HUM	AMA	110	55	50%	82	75%
HUM	HIS	65	33	51%	47	72%
HUM	LDC	118	71	60%	80	68%
HUM	PPL	156	90	58%	113	72%
HUM	IIH	10	5	50%	10	100%
HUM	Total	459	254	55%	332	72%
SCI	BIO	56	5	9%	28	50%
SCI	CHE	47	14	30%	23	49%
SCI	CMP	56	12	21%	32	57%
SCI	ENV	48	13	27%	34	71%
SCI	MTH	28	10	36%	12	43%
SCI	PHA	64	7	11%	20	31%
SCI	Total	299	61	20%	149	50%
SSF	DEV	45	1	2%	27	60%
SSF	ECO	33	11	33%	18	55%
SSF	EDU	127	32	25%	54	43%
SSF	LAW	49	8	16%	21	43%
SSF	NBS	97	68	70%	83	86%
SSF	PSY	29	11	38%	21	72%
SSF	SWK	51	6	12%	14	27%
SSF	Total	431	137	32%	238	55%
<i>Lists published with no school / module code</i>			28		32	
Grand Totals		1417	512	34%	801	57%

Figure 1 - Breakdown of mandate compliance by school to date

1. Commentary on data

- 512 lists were published or republished on Talis by UEA academics between 15th May and 31st July 2017, 309 were newly published, never before seen by the library. This represents an estimated 34% of taught undergraduate and postgraduate modules¹.
- At this point last year (05/08/2016) under the previous voluntary model; only 30 lists had been published by academics. There were only 548 published over for the whole of 2016/17. This difference alone indicates the positive impact the mandate and deadline has had.
- Further to this, another 289 lists were published in August and September, representing an estimated 56% compliance across all schools. Given that the mandate was enacted in May, this represents a considerable turnaround on the part of the academic community at UEA within a relatively short period of time.
- Library staff have checked all lists received before the July deadline for core reading and are working through the additional 300 lists. Further reading is being checked, but core material remains the priority.
- The library service is beginning to benefit from this increased supply of information on the books and other resources required to support academic teaching. This in turn will help to address concerns raised in the NSS about inadequate resource provision.
- The issue of academic time spent on entering lists into the Talis system is still the most pressing issue raised in University committees with regards to Talis, most recently in the ISD staff survey². We acknowledge that there are academic colleagues who remain opposed to the process and are aware that ongoing support and advocacy remains critical, as well as sensitivity in dealing with legitimate concerns as they are raised.

2. Further developments in 2018

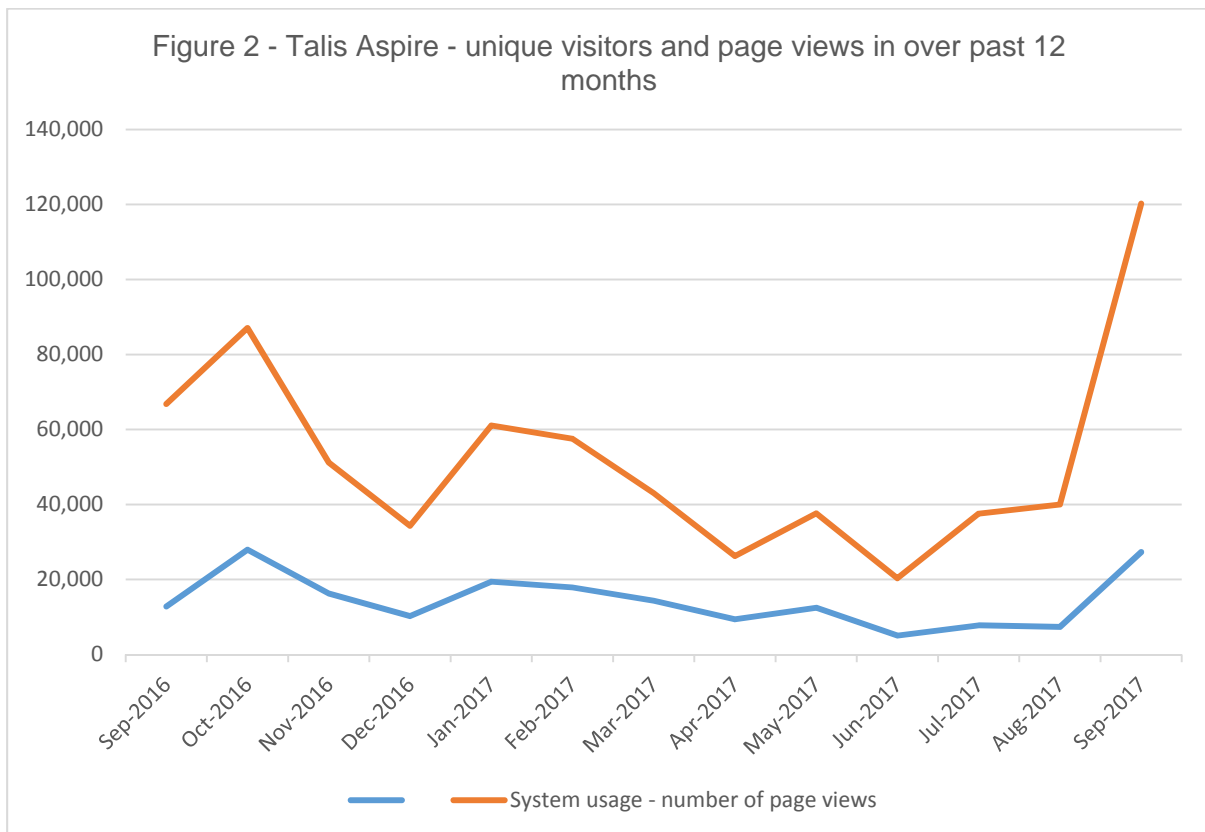
- In response to academic concerns, the library will look at streamlining the process around list creation, including replacing the 'bookmarklet' with a dedicated browser plugin. In addition, the Talis software should benefit from a redeveloped editing interface and front end which will hopefully go some way to address concerns around usability.
- There will be a way to flag legitimate reasons for not providing an online reading list. The new module outline online form will have a flag to indicate where a module does not require a Talis list.
- The library is keen to see **Semester 2 lists**. We ideally need them by **December 8th** to ensure we have enough time to order books and eBooks ahead of the start of teaching.
- The library will continue to advocate for Talis Reading Lists across the University. This will include work to better promote benefits of Talis to students and faculty, positioning Talis acting as a 'shopping list' for course materials in addition to its core role of embedding digital and library content in teaching.

¹ This figure in particular should be used with caution as there is not a direct 1-1 list to module correlation in all cases. To explain further, some modules make use of multiple reading lists and sometimes a single reading list will be shared across multiple modules

² ISD **staff** survey detailed briefing note, P2: "Usage of, and satisfaction with, the Talis software are low for 2017 (usage is 25% and satisfaction amongst users is 34%). Many respondents are not aware of Talis, or they feel they do not have time to learn how to use it. Many users were dissatisfied with the software due to it being difficult and time consuming to learn."

- The library has enhanced the visibility and accessibility of training and support for academic users by relocating a member of staff to the CTCL (Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning) on the walkway to provide drop-in support.
- Some schools, such as DEV, NBS and some of the Humanities schools have taken on temporary clerical support to support academics in initial list entry. This has helped to close the gap more quickly, although it is important to ensure that the academic takes back full ownership of the list so that it can be updated and republished in future years. Feedback on the impact of Talis on academic workloads is helpful and is reported back to the Project Board who provide guidance on future resource allocation.

3. Usage of Talis over the previous academic year.



- The growth in Reading List content created by UEA academics has also led to a corresponding growth in usage of the Talis Aspire software by students.
- Unique visits to the website (the number of distinct users requesting pages) have risen to 27,313 in September, a 47% rise on this point in the previous academic year.
- The number of pages requested has also increased to 120,230 a 55% rise over the previous year.
- High usage in September indicates that presenting Reading List information online is of particular value to returning students wishing to engage with their reading ahead of the start of teaching.

Appendix A) Major benefits to students from mandating Talis Aspire

A1) Accelerate the growth of digital resource provision

Since its introduction Talis has allowed the library to provide three times as many scanned book chapters to students.

- Embedded digital resources for UEA teaching is a strategic objective of the University. Talis ties into the library Digital First policy of the library by making book chapter scans and eBooks available wherever feasible, given budget and license conditions. Talis is already providing high levels of digital content with 48% of all core reading books and 54% of all core reading articles listed in Talis being offered in digital format.
- The Talis interface removes many of the access barriers between student and online resources making it much easier for students to access digital materials for their learning.

A2) Provide a better consistent experience for UEA students

This year 801 online reading Lists have been published by UEA academics using Talis (2017/18), nearly 60% of teaching for semester 1.

- Wholesale adoption of Talis at UEA would provide a consistent user experience for students in terms of online and interactive reading lists available for every module, appropriate for a modern digital learning environment.
- With such offerings in place at other HE institutions, this level of service is likely now considered a 'hygiene factor' by prospective students.

A3) Reduce the cost to students of resourcing a course

Talis lists are regularly reviewed and checked by the library to ensure stock is sufficient to meet student needs.

- A Talis Aspire Reading List for every module would thus have a significant impact on book availability allowing the library to stock sufficient copies of material (or the right ebook license) based upon student numbers enrolled on a module.
- The mechanisms to denote 'core' and 'further' reading in Talis make it far easier for the library to quickly stock appropriate numbers, helping to reduce the cost to students in resourcing their course.

Appendix B) Major benefits to academic teaching from mandating use of Talis Aspire

B1) Ensure all students have access to key reading

At its heart, the University wide adoption of Talis addresses an academic issue - ensuring that all students are sufficiently prepared for seminars by having read the required texts.

- This was illustrated in a Times Higher Education Survey where 52% of academics surveyed were concerned that 'students turn up for class without having done the required reading'³. By using Talis, academics can ensure that students get access to readings in the most efficient way possible.
- Compared with than a static Word or PDF document, Talis can offer much more by presenting core reading to students directly (where ebooks or digital chapter scans can be provided) and show library class-marks and live availability for print books. This places all students on a level playing field in terms of access to reading.
- The time saving arising from direct access to reading allows students to spend more time reading around a subject. It also provides advantages for students with additional needs or studying 'at a distance' or on placement.

B2) Improve the turnaround time for resource provision

On average, library staff can review and order stock from 4 Talis lists a day compared with 1 list per day to review a Word or PDF document. Wholesale adoption of Talis would allow for the removal of a time consuming paper based workflow for checking Word/PDF based lists.

- Efficiencies will improve over time as the Talis system records all decisions and highlight changes to lists meaning subsequent rechecks of the same lists are also much shorter. In contrast, paper based lists must be printed and rechecked in their entirety every year. This is a cumulative overhead of time taken away from Library staff that would be better spent focusing other student-focused activities.

B3) Provide Lecturers and the University with direct feedback and learning analytics

All Talis lists have in-built reporting on high and low use digitised readings which will potentially provide useful data to academics for improving teaching quality.

- They also allows students to feedback to module conveyors and their peers on the usefulness of reading. Talis also provides a platform for contributing to institutional learner analytics work which may be useful for the TEF. Greater usage of the system will provide more meaningful data.

B4) Ensure stable access to learning resources over time

³ Grove, Jack. "THE Teaching Survey 2017: Results and Analysis". *Times Higher Education (THE)*. N.p., 2017. Web. 22 Mar. 2017

Use of Talis reduces risk in terms of ongoing access to teaching resources. Talis works by direct linking to resources, allowing both the library and the resource provider to track their usage, as well as ensuring that UEA is compliant with any publisher license terms and conditions.

- Talis is now the only mechanism for the University to offer digital chapter scans that are compliant with the CLA HE license. Any other type of scan, if not checked, is at risk of being taken down.
- This issue particularly important for modules that already have PDFs embedded in Blackboard. In these cases, the rationale to switch to Talis is to ensure that such resources have appropriate copyright clearance, that dynamic links are maintained, and that there is minimal risk of them being taken down.